



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNTY WORKING GROUP

AT West Midlands Bridge Club

ON Tuesday 3 November 2015 @ 12pm

Representatives:

Region	Name	Region	Name	Region	Name
Midlands (NOT)	Nicky Bainbridge	EBU Board	Jeremy Dhondy	EBU Board	Darren Evetts
Northern (YOR)	Lesley Millet	EBU Board	Ron Millet	Northern (MER)	Paul Roberts

Apologies:

Region	Name	Region	Name
EBU General Mgr	Barry Capal	Southern (HIW)	Andy Hughes
Midlands (GLO)	Alan Wearmouth		

Chair: Darren Evetts

Darren welcomed Nicky Bainbridge, chair Midland Counties Working Group.

1. Apologies

- a. Robert Procter stood down from the NCWG as he is no longer co-chair of Midlands CWG. Alan Wearmouth is no longer co-chair, but has agreed to remain on the NCWG. Bernard Eddleston stood down as Eastern Counties Chair and from the NCWG.
- b. It was agreed that we should consider Skype meetings.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting (8 June 2015) – Already agreed by email.

3. Matters Arising excluding Discussion Topics – None.

4. Discussion Topics

- a. Topic A (Lesley Millet) - Improving the relationship between the EBU/Counties and unaffiliated Clubs.

Lesley presented some initial thoughts on the proposal of a Regional Support/Development Officer. The following points were noted:

- i) What could the job description/focus be?
 - a. Developing existing resources.
 - b. Membership Campaigns with engaged Counties/Clubs.
- ii) How could the post be funded?

- a. It was agreed that whilst funding was important, it should not prevent this Group from drafting proposal.
 - iii) Who would the person appointed be responsible to?
 - a. Aylesbury?
 - b. Regional Group(s)?
 - c. Both?
 - iv) How would this role work with the Club Liaison Officer?
 - v) What performance indicators could be applied?
 - vi) It was agreed that there is a need for something, but exactly what requires further consideration.
 - vii) Lesley to conduct wider consultation to gauge where our focus should be.
- b. Topic B (Alan Wearmouth/Ron Millet) - Developing a Value Proposition and a Progression Strategy for Players at all levels that revitalises our membership.
 - i. The Board has appointed Ron Millet to set up a Membership Development Working Group.
 - ii. Ron outlined the current thinking and it was noted that:
 - 1. Membership numbers were still affected by maintenance in the databases (deceased members, duplicates, etc). Requests to Clubs to maintain their membership database through their online area had been successful in places.
 - iii. There are approximately 54,500 members, of which 44,500 are 'active'.
 - 1. It was suggested that 20% of the membership are 75 years of age, or older.
 - 2. There are currently approximately 1100 new members every year.
 - 3. There are 414 juniors (under 25).
 - iv. Areas of focus should be:
 - 1. New members via education programmes.
 - 2. Ensuring that new players are not lost when they have completed education programmes.
 - 3. Retaining existing members.
 - v. The process should be collaborative with Counties, Clubs and EBED.
 - vi. Teaching allied to Clubs is considered the best way to keep new players within an EBU environment.
 - vii. Value Proposition for Clubs/Members – Leaflet - **Action RM**
 - 1. Members.
 - 2. Clubs.
 - viii. In some situations the cost of UM would significantly increase the running costs, eg when leagues are organised and played in people's homes, where the current annual cost is a website. How do we encourage affiliation when costs are significantly increased?
 - ix. Membership Campaign:
 - 1. Principle Agreed.
 - 2. Terms of Reference.
 - 3. Set up Working Group.
 - 4. Trials in Clubs and Counties.
 - 5. Targets of Club Liaison.
 - 6. Andrew Urbanski to be invited to next meeting.

7. Commitment from our Clubs
 8. Short advert (movie) – be part of this (bridge) family – **Action PR**
 9. Post meeting note – JD circulated presentations from the French and Israeli Bridge Federations relating to membership campaigns.
- c. Topic C - Structuring, staffing and motivating the volunteer workforce that we depend on at National and County level

Now contained in 'Best Practice for County Associations'.

It was agreed to combine all three topics, A, B, and C, into one Topic D, entitled Membership Development, as the current direction seemed to encompass elements from all topics.

5. Output from County Chairmen's Meeting (1 July 2015) – None.
6. Eastern Counties – Update
 - i. BE stood down, no replacement as yet. General agreement to meet via Skype. **Action DE**
7. Midland Counties – Update
 - i. IT User Group – It was agreed that this was not a subject this group would focus on.
 - ii. EBU Scorer – A paper was presented which purported to be from the Midland Counties Working Group when, in fact, it was the view of one Club only. It was agreed, however, that this was not a matter for the National County Working Group.
 - iii. Calendars – The Midlands Group had looked at the possibility of scheduling certain events at a common time (eg Championship Pairs, all on the same day/weekend). However, this is not possible due to other geographical events (eg Green Point events, etc).
 - i) It was noted that:
 - a. Could the EBU designate some weekends as 'event free' to give Counties the ability to organise local events?
 - b. The EBU calendar is currently available up to February 2017.
 - c. Force Majeure can lead to last minute changes.
 - d. Attendances at many events are falling, both EBU/County and Club, which could be the current trend.
 - e. Is it possible to create email alerts when the online EBU Calendar is amended?
 - i. It was commented that Google Calendar could be used to show automatic updates.
8. Northern Counties – Update
 - i. Simon Barb, EBED, attended the meeting to give a presentation.
 - ii. A clearer understanding of how EBED/EBU works is needed, particularly in the teaching area. The following was noted:

- i) Simon Barb is leaving.
- ii) Jonathan Taylor is leaving, but will work on a consultancy and voluntary basis.
- iii) Sue Maxwell has joined the team.
- iv) Further appointments will be considered in due course.
- v) Two for One TD Courses is due for change.
- vi) Teacher scheme unchanged.
- vii) Bridge in Schools - Resourcing – What is available?

9. Southern Counties – Update

- i. Nothing to report

10. Provincial Counties - Update

- i. Nothing to report

11. Next Steps

The following items were deferred:

- a. What is our view regarding what the EBU's policy towards unaffiliated Club could be? (BFTF 2013-2018)
- b. Do we have any comments regarding a low-cost or free way for citizens with limited income to learn and play bridge? (BFTF 2013-2018)

12. AoB

None

13. Date of Next Meeting – DE to circulate